



THE PHILATELIC COMMUNICATOR

Journal of American Philatelic Society Writers Unit #30

www.wu30.org

Second Quarter 2010

iCommunication: Pumping Up the Visitors

By Francis Adams

Part II

How can we get more visitors to our web sites and how do we get more of the 90 percent who stay for 30 seconds or less to remain longer? There's no magic to it — just work. Let's employ things we all can do relatively easily.

Fresh Content

There's nothing worse than visiting a web site with nothing new. If I've been there before and nothing looks as if it was updated, I leave. Those hard-won visitors will stop visiting if you've nothing to offer. Why should they waste their time?

This is nothing less than the most important point in bringing in visitors. The search engines look for new content and the more updates there are, the more often the search engines visit. Nothing like having your web site picked up because you have *news*.

Give visitors something to look at once they get to the web site. Useful content is ultra-important for return visits and beginning interaction with the society. Whether it is society news, exhibits, digital philatelic studies, slide shows, or movies — it is all relevant content in a digital age.

When visiting a web site, I personally don't interact well if only a list of officers and an e-mail address is presented unless I'm really motivated. But, I might listen to an audio interview of the society

president or watch a video on cat stamps or the history of Wells Fargo. Wouldn't you?

Introduction

For those who must include an introductory section outlining the history of the organization and every development for the last 50 years, stop. Cut that text to a single paragraph no longer than four lines. Reading all that *touchy-feely* stuff is nice — for the writer.

Viewers want information on the subject they are searching for. They're not really interested in becoming friends until they know you and your organization are worth the time. Don't waste the screen real estate with meaningless diatribe. If it must be included, ensure keywords are included in the text.

A Linked Index

Give the visitor a sense of what the site contains with a meaningful index or table of contents with links to the various sections — right on the Home page. Don't make visitors dig because they won't.

The second reason is that the search engines will pick up on the list entries, section titles, using them as 'virtual keywords'. Indexing these adds to the value of the text on the page. Lastly, more value is given to the words used as links in a web page. Using these index words as links pushes them even higher in importance using the search engine's logic.

Domain Name

This is difficult once a site is built, but should receive thought

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Meta tags help get your site top billing.



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Albert W. Starkweather
Editor's Domain



Lost and Disappearing Media

With Sony's recent announcement the 3.5-inch floppy disk is joining its eight- and 5¼-inch predecessors in the graveyard, along with the SyQuest platters. The Iomega Zip disk is also nearly defunct.

Save the Originals When Archiving

Many publications — newspapers in particular — are digitally archiving their libraries and discarding the originals. This is more than a slippery slope; it is a recipe for disaster. Original print material saved only as microfilm / microfiche or on computer media have a very good chance of being lost forever if the source material is not saved.

Very few computers can read the media depicted here and, if they can, are unlikely to be able to run the obsolete formats in which the data was stored.

In addition to saving the printed output, there are a couple of suggestions for preserving digital files. First, when you get new or updated software, open all files from the previous version and save them in the new program and save the updated files as PDFs in the current version of Adobe Acrobat.

Finally, make high resolution printouts of the digital files on acid-free paper and save them carefully, being sure they have an extra title sheet to make them easy to find. In the event of a disaster, these can be run through optical character recognition to recover the text and images can be scanned — not the best solution but a solution when all else fails.



Alan Warren NPM Notes

Research Papers Easy To Access

The research portal of the Smithsonian National Postal Museum's web site continues to offer information and reports of interest to those seeking information about the postal service as well as the museum's own collections.

Two recent papers among others, in the former category, are found by going to WWW.POSTALMUSEUM.SI.EDU and then clicking on *Research* in the upper left menu. Then select *Resources* and after that click on *Industry White Papers*. ▶



Short Takes News & Commentary

Ken Martin Is APS Executive Director

Ken Martin has become the 124-year-old American Philatelic Society's sixth executive director. He had served as interim executive director since Peter Mastrangelo's departure in April 2009.

In 1995, following undergraduate and graduate work in computer and political science at Penn State, Martin began full-time APS employment in the Circuit Sales Department. By early the following year his time was split between Youth, Development, and Circuit Sales. By the middle of 1996 he was also Acting Show Director, a position he held until becoming deputy executive director in 2006.



Ken Martin

Peter Martin Edits Duck Tracks

Peter Martin is the new editor of *Duck Tracks*, the National Duck Stamp Collectors Society's quarterly journal, President Ira Cotton has announced. He replaces Rita Dumaine, Houston, TX, who stepped down after serving as editor since 2005.

The society was founded in 1992. Membership, including the journal, is \$20 per year. Applications are available at [HTTP://NDSCS.ORG](http://NDSCS.ORG) or from NDSCS Secretary, P. O. Box 43, Harleysville, PA 19438.



P. Martin

Gini Horn Leaves APRL

Gini Horn has been terminated as American Philatelic Research Library librarian, a position she held for more than 25 years. Ellen Peachey, Ken Martin's wife, has been named interim librarian while a search for a replacement is conducted. ⚡

One item issued by the USPS Office of the Inspector General describes a program for the *Electrification of Delivery Vehicles*. Most mail delivery operations are less than 40 miles per day and fit the model for using alternative fueled, i.e., battery-operated, vehicles. Recharging would take place each night when vehicles are not in use between 5 p.m. and 8 a.m.

A number of scenarios are discussed in the report that underline the feasibility of electrification of much of the USPS fleet. The postal service could in fact serve as a national laboratory for electric vehicle testing. Another report listed as a resource is a Congressional Research Service paper by Kevin R. Kosar that reflects on *Post Office and Retail Postal Facility Closures: Overview and Issues for Congress*. In order to stem some of the costs of the USPS, the closing of postal stations has come under the lens.

This report looks at the ramifications of closing facilities that were intended to serve the public. The USPS must notify the affected public of intended closures with a 60-day comment period. After a decision is made to close a branch or station there is a 30-day period for appeals made to the Postal Regulatory Commission. The details of the appeals procedures are provided in this report along with discussion on the effects such closures would have on the public. The question is raised as to whether any postal employees would lose their job since most are protected by collective bargaining agreements.




These are just two of the papers that will be found on the museum site. Other papers discuss the naming of post offices, the effects of reducing mail delivery by one day a week, and franking privileges. ⚡

Dream of Richmond!
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APS StampShow 2010

Richmond Convention Center August 12-15
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www.stamps.org/StampShow/Exhibits.htm

How I Prepare The Old World Archaeologist

By Caroline Scannell, Editor

Editors know how much they can count on writers who mean well, but find but sometimes life gets in the way of them supplying articles in a timely fashion. Therefore, I keep a stock of articles in my computer anywhere from one to three or even five pages, which I can use to fill in. Each issue of *The Old World Archaeologist* also contains something I have written. Since we are a quarterly all I need is four articles per year and can lay these out well in advance.

The lead article is important. This is what goes on the first page of the OWA and highlights a subject that has appeared on stamps, the story of which can be told through stamps. When I am absolutely stumped, I check out the UNESCO web site (www.UNESCO.ORG) to see what in the world they are saving.

Archaeology is such a popular topic in the news that I never run out of ideas. With advancing medical technology everything old is new again! There are even sites on the internet that highlight archaeological sites with postage stamps! There are plenty of ideas out there for archaeology. Just pick up any popular magazine and you can't escape King Tut. Then there is the History Channel which makes DVDs about its shows.

Once the main article is chosen I need a second, smaller article, which usually comes from my stash. I prefer to put my writers on the front page and anything I write can go on page six or seven for all I care. People like to see their name in print — it gives them a sense of appreciation and accomplishment, and the editor an avenue for new material. Happy writers are frequent writers.

I always choose articles from different geographical locations and avoid two on African areas or European areas. I like to mix one European and one Egyptian or one Chinese and one Mediterranean. There is a lot to choose from. This year I am trying to add a new feature. Starting with the April issue, the OWA will have a half page about a particular stamp. One of my writers sent me something oriental. I had written something Persian, but liked his better than mine — it's done better! I'll have to bring mine up to par and then I hope to get someone to write about the lack of historical evidence regarding the Trojan horse.

Now that I have chosen the main content, the balance is filled up with the "New Digs" (what we call our new stamp issues), with each

one depicted in color with as much information as I can gather about it. Since I tend to get my information several months before *Scott Stamp Monthly* can publish in most instances, at the end of the "New Digs" I add information about stamps depicted in earlier issues, such as Scott number and issue date if it was not published with the stamp or any other information I have managed to collect.

Since I can stuff seven sheets (14 pages) of 24 pound paper into a 9 × 12-inch manila envelope for two ounces, this is my goal. If I am short a page, or two, or three, I fill in with a section called "Archaeology Today," which highlights what is going on in archaeology as I go to press. I collect articles from three or more sources, copy them into the publication and trim them down as I fill in and press time approaches. If pickings are sparse, I hit Zahi Ha-

wass' web site (WWW.DRHAWASS.COM). He is Egypt's secretary general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities and always makes good copy. About one third of our membership has an interest in Egypt.

The October issue is heavier, going to three ounces because I refuse to overpay the post office postage for adding only the annual renewal notice which I expand to collect information that I need. The expanded renewal notice is very important, as this is my only communication with the bulk of our membership. I ask which article the readers enjoyed the most, which the least, from each and every issue, listing all of them. I also inquire about the collecting interest of each member. Since we started with a very weak treasury I keep one eye on the publication and one eye on the bottom line.

A few years ago I added a line in the renewal notice — *contri-*

butions — and was shocked at the amount that came in. The day I publish "New Digs" in black and white will cease, since I have several members who pay for the ink, contributing as much as \$50 to the Ink Fund. They're paying for it, so I give them what they want.

I received a bit of a shock one night while reading *National Geographic* about various tests being made on King Tut or some other mummy and came across the name of one of the members of the Old World Archaeology Study Unit. I checked the location and discovered one of our members was supplying information to Dr. Hawass. I suggest other editors take any course they can to get to know their membership — from meetings at local stamp shows or even national ones if you can get half a dozen people together. There's always dinner! ►



2009 APS CAC Chapter Newsletter Awards

The APS Chapter Activities Committee has named winners in its 2009 Newsletter Competition. The judges were Robert Odenweller, Hal Vogel, and Patrick Walters.

Class I: Single Page

GOLD: *Driftwood*, Long Beach Stamp Club, Lloyd Baumann, Huntington Beach, CA

GOLD: *The Westfield Philatelist*, Westfield Stamp Club, Frederick C. Skvara, Bridgewater, NJ

VERMEIL: *Palo Duro Philatelist*, Palo Duro Philatelic Society, Hugh Burgess, Albuquerque, NM

SILVER-BRONZE: *Sarasota Philatelic Club Philatelic Bulletin*, Jack Seaman, Sarasota, FL

Class II: Multi-Page

GOLD: *Knoxville Philatelic Society News*, Thomas W Broadhead, Knoxville, TN

GOLD: *NEPPS Philatelic Inquirer*, Northeast Pennsylvania Philatelic Society, Rufus Wilson, Dalton, PA

GOLD: *Saugeen Stamp Club Bulletin*, Ralph Wyndham, Lucknow, ON Canada

GOLD: *The Shoebox*, Lakeshore Stamp Club, Inc., Raymond W. Ireson, Roxboro, PQ Canada

VERMEIL: *Milwaukee Philatelist*, Milwaukee Philatelic Society, Inc., Carol Schutta, Milwaukee, WI

VERMEIL: *OCPS Stamp News*, Orange County Philatelic Society, Grey Ouellette, Norco, CA

VERMEIL: *The Philatex*, San Antonio Philatelic Association,

Lea Senghaas and Dora Roberts, San Antonio, TX

VERMEIL: *The Postmaster*, New Haven Philatelic Society, Campbell Buchanan, Branford, CT

VERMEIL: *Stamping Around*, Mid-Cities Stamp Club, Peter Elias, Plano, TX

VERMEIL: *Wichita Stamp Club Newsletter*, Neal E. Danielson, Wichita, KS

SILVER: *Calgary Philatelist*, Calgary Philatelic Society, Dale Speirs, Calgary, AB Canada

SILVER: *Chicago Philatelic Society Bulletin*, Randall Sherman, Chicago, IL

SILVER: *Hollywood Philatelist*, Hollywood Stamp Club, Enrique Setaro, Miami, FL

SILVER: *Huntsville Philatelic Club Newsletter*, Arthur J. Cole, Huntsville, AL

SILVER: *South Miami Stamp Club Newsletter*, Enrique Setaro

SILVER: *Stamping About Town*, Charlottesville Stamp Club, William W. Sihler, Keswick, VA

SILVER-BRONZE: *Philatelic Society of Pittsburgh*, Paul M. H. Lienhardt, Pittsburgh, PA

SILVER-BRONZE: *The Western Reserve Philatelist*, Warren Area Stamp Club, Alexander Jerry Savakis, Warren, OH

Class III: Federations

GOLD: *PhilaJournal*, Greater Toronto Area Philatelic Alliance, Garfield Portch, Etobicoke, ON Canada

GOLD: *Scribbles*, Rocky Mountain Philatelic Library, Ronald Hill, Denver, CO



The last thing I do is the table of contents, because until the final page is done I have no idea what is going to appear on any page. Such things as the president's message and member ads that I can squeeze in (member ads run gratis, per space availability), or highlighting one of the new issue stamps are generally moved around in order to make the most efficient use of space. I only have two ounces and some times those "New Digs" easily can run six pages.

My filler is the "Archaeology Today" section. I keep filling this in as the three months go along. Everything goes in it — things I agree with, things I think are pure hogwash, and things that only border on archaeology given the dates I deal with — about 100,000 BC to AD1400. I like finding articles covering the subjects of the major articles included and try to keep updates of what is happening with sites I know my membership is interested in, such as the Lascaux cave. Me? I like my men ice-cold and tend to publish everything on the Ice Man of Bolzano/Bozin, especially since I actually spent a night or two in that town many, many years ago. He was still in the ice when I was there. I usually start out with 10 pages of "Archaeology Today" and trim it down to no more than four.

Between the major article (four or five pages), the minor article (two to three pages), some kind of highlight — a new issue or someone's favorite stamp (half to one page); "New Digs" (four to six pages), as you can see the President's Message gets stuffed in there somewhere,

an ad for the web site (which desperately needs a new webmaster as it has not been updated since June 2009), and the table of contents, I have no more than three pages for "Archaeology Today."

The final step is to print, collate, and staple the pages, stuff them into manilla envelopes labeled and separated into domestic and foreign, apply postage, and mail. This empties the living room for a few weeks until things start arriving again — articles, letters, and newspaper articles. So far no mummies.



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Guidelines for Beginning Philatelic Authors

By John M. Hotchner

There is no short course in writing skills for new contributors to philatelic publications, but those are among my favorite people to work with as part of our task as established writers/editors is to recruit and work with the people who will replace us one day.

They have to start somewhere, and with whatever writing skills they have. It is not infrequently that I pull out whatever little hair I have left in editing their first efforts. I do not claim to be the perfect writer or editor, but I have been doing both for more than 40 years, and feel competent to attempt a list of guidelines to help beginning writers to produce usable copy.

I am certain that other Writers Unit members can add to it, and welcome your writing to our editor with additions or contrary opinions. The list that follows is not in any special order. All items are of roughly equal importance.

- Shorter is better. This applies to sentences (simple and declarative), paragraphs (no more than 10 typed lines, and preferably fewer), and articles (your objective is to convey facts or your opinion, not to write the *Great American Novel*). Readers will react subconsciously and negatively to large blocks of text, and may not even attempt your prose if it looks daunting.
- Never use 50 words where 25 will do. Look up the word *blowtating*. Some authors seem to think lengthy text looks scholarly. In fact, your task is to convey precise meaning in the fewest possible words. My job as an editor is to cut out the excess, although authors ought to learn the discipline of doing that on your own.
- Editorializing — giving your personal opinions — is fine so long as it is identified as such, and not as fact. There is a world of difference between “Stamp collecting has been in decline for the last 30 years.” and “It is my opinion that stamp collecting...”
- Check your facts. Because you remember reading it a few weeks — or years — ago does not make it so. Google makes this less onerous, as does a well-kept clipping file. Don’t say it unless you are 100 percent certain it is true.
- Avoid awkward phrasing. If it does not sound like something you would say, look at it again.
- Use spell and grammar check. These tools don’t eliminate all problems, but they do identify most. Then wait 24 hours and reread your article for comprehension. If possible also have your spouse or a friend read your draft.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Better yet, have major articles peer reviewed by an expert in the field. I did that recently with the a series of articles on precancels. Although these were written by one of the leading experts in this specialty, the peer reviewer caught a number of errors that would have embarrassed both the author and the editor who is not a precancel expert. Be sure the reviewer checks illustrations and callouts.

- If you use a term that is not general knowledge to your expected readership, explain what it means.
- Put your illustrations at the end of your text, or as an attachment. Do not embed them in the text. Though your *publisher*

program can produce wonderful integrated pages, don’t do this unless you are asked to do so.


EDITOR’S NOTE: I prefer illustrations as separate files as Microsoft Word and other word processing programs are notorious for corrupting artwork.

- Do refer to your illustrations in the text with a short description and Figure 1, Figure 2, etc. Label the illustrations so the editor does not have to guess.
- Words have precise meanings. Make sure the ones you use mean what you intend them to mean. Don’t guess. Look up words of which you are uncertain.
- Read your text for logical progression. First should come your premise and the assumptions you are making, then the conclusion you draw from them, and finally your proof(s), and a summary.
- Be careful about repeating points made — it should not be necessary if the logic of the article flows smoothly.
- Watch for and avoid repeating words or phrases.
- The first time you use a phrase or name that can be abbreviated, spell it out and provide the abbreviation; e.g Scott Catalogue Value (SCV), and then use the abbreviation from that point on.
- Spell out *one* through *nine* and use numerals for 10 and above.
- **EDITOR’S NOTE:** ages, percentages, measurements, and equations are always expressed as numerals.
- When you include the name of a resource (the name of a club, book or web site), also provide the address of a contact point so that the reader can actually find out more.
- Provide your text in double spaced draft if possible, and do not use fancy fonts. If the editor finds it necessary to return it to you for corrections or further work, you will be better able to follow the editor’s notations.
- If you are writing a series of articles, repeat only the essential conclusions of preceding articles. Always seek to plow new ground in new articles.
- End with an ending, not something that leaves the reader hanging, or with a question mark.

By following these guidelines, you will enhance your chances of having your articles accepted for publication.

You may contact Hotchner at JMHSTAMP@VERIZON.NET. 

Expert Help for Writers and Editors

Dane S. Claussen, Writers Unit #30 immediate past president, offers free critiques of periodicals and books / manuscripts. Submit the four most recent issues, including postage equivalent to four times the first class mailing fee. Any unused amount will be returned. Critiques can be expected in about 30 days. Inquire before sending books and manuscripts, providing a brief description. Return time will vary, depending on length and other commitments. Include a SASE. Send to: Dane S. Claussen, 1211 Buena Vista St. Apt 4, Pittsburgh PA 15212-4562; DSCLAUSSEN@HOTMAIL.COM. 

A Form Letter To Answer Authors' Queries

If you are an editor, you probably get queries from authors about possible articles. Kenneth Trettin, editor of *The American Philatelic Congress Book*, has a simplified form letter that can be sent to the prospective writer as e-mail or snail mail that you can adapt:

"Thank you for your interest in writing for *The American Philatelic Congress Book*.

"My preference for submissions is by electronic means, although a printed manuscript is also acceptable. If electronic, you may send it by email or on a CD. The preferred format for the text is RTF, although common word processor files such as Word are also acceptable. I will reformat all submissions in InDesign so that they conform to the book's styles.

"Tables are best sent as additional files rather than as part of the text as I handle them separately from the text.

"Illustrations of covers should be TIFF or JPG files separate from the text, as individual files for each illustration. They should be


at 300 dpi and, if JPGs, should be saved at the highest quality/biggest file size setting. Covers should be against a white background, stamps against a black background. Leave sufficient background around each item so that I can straighten and crop them.

"Illustrations should be numbered with references in the text to the figure. It is preferred that captions be complete sentences. In longer captions, the first may be a partial sentence giving descriptive information followed by one or more complete sentences.

"We print on a 7 × 10-inch page, so covers get reduced in size. If scans are at 100 percent, I will reduce them in size as necessary. Normally I get two per page, but may place three or four with some overlap if it does not obscure vital parts of the cover.

"I use author-date citations rather than numbered references, although I do use footnotes when giving supplemental information. You can look at a recent edition of *The Congress Book*. I will format the reference list to conform to the book's style; just be sure to include all of the common information for the references such as volume, issue number, date, and page numbers.

"I will send you printed proof copy for review as well as second or third rounds of proofs should it be necessary. Authors do receive complementary copies of the book.

"I would appreciate receiving manuscripts by the end of the year although if you need additional time please contact me. Should you have any additional questions please contact me." 

On Writing a Column

By Jim Hannah


It's really about wanting to share — and enthusiasm. You need both to write a column. Without them, there's no reason to do it. With them you can overcome almost any obstacle. Want to try it? Good. Let's chat.

You've read columns. You noted they have general subjects or themes. Themes vary widely. Good ones all have enough *room* — nooks and crannies — for an interesting series of articles. Got a theme in mind? Try this simple exercise. Write it down on a piece of paper in six words or less. Underline it. Below, list six areas in the theme about which you can say something interesting and informative. Done? You've created a temporary name for your column and rough-sketches your first six articles!

Pick an article from your list. Make it one that's a good example of your theme. It will introduce you and sketch out your column's turf. Next, look at similar columns and do a word count. That gives you an idea of your column size — how many words you'll need each time. Word counts keep you from trying to cram in too much per article.

Easy, right? You're ready to start writing. Well, almost. It's time to introduce you to your best friend: the editor. Forget everything you've seen in the movies about editors. Their function is to help your column succeed. An editor watches your back — your spelling, grammar, and even the facts you use. Trust him.

Now go ahead and write your first column. Put it aside a few days. Then take it out and read it critically. Tweak it so it's clear, accurate and easy to read. Check spelling, facts, and word count. Select a final name for your column and article. Write a cover letter to the editor, telling him about your column and yourself. Send him the letter and the article draft. The response just might surprise you.

JIM HANNAH of Staten Island writes "The Frugal Philatelist Column" for the *Stamp Insider*. 

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APS Adopts Major Literature Judging Changes

On March 18 the APS Board of Directors adopted revised criteria for philatelic literature exhibiting and judging. There are many changes in what will be accepted and how it will be judged. There is also a new evaluation sheet similar to the one used for philatelic competition. The most notable changes are the exclusion of auction catalogues and limited acceptance of other catalogues.

A few entries in the upcoming *NAPEX* and *APS STAMPSHOW* competitions already have been accepted that would not be in the future. At the judges' discretion, the old score sheet may be used for these. All exhibits from *CHICAGOPEX 2010* on will fall under the new procedures.

The new *APS Manual of Philatelic Judging* Chapter 23A on literature judging follows. A full copy of the manual may be downloaded at WWW.STAMPS.ORG/DIRECTORIES/JUDGINGMANUAL.PDF.

Chapter 23A — Literature Class

Philatelic literature may be entered for judging and exhibition at those APS nationally-accredited philatelic exhibitions offering the Literature Class. Literature judging shall be done using the criteria outlined in this chapter.

Historically, philatelic literature competitions have been well supported. Every author or publisher entering a competition must be fully aware that, for a case bound volume, many or most, if not all, of the comments or criticisms offered by the jury cannot be acted upon until a revised edition or reprint is published. Thus, the real reason for entry in literature competitions is to receive the reward of recognition for effort through a medal. Moreover, a good level medal may lend credence and awareness to a work and lead to increased sales.

Periodicals are most likely to gain potential immediate benefit from the judging in that comments and suggestions from the jury may be implemented, as favored, right away.

Literature Types

§ Accepted Philatelic Literature

Philatelic books, compendiums, handbooks, monographs

A *compendium* is a concise, yet comprehensive compilation of a body of knowledge, usually gathered from several resources (standard definition).

Non-philatelic books about the hobby, e.g., guides to collecting or exhibiting

Catalogues (limited acceptance, see below)

Articles (limited acceptance, see below)

Philatelic society journals, periodicals (including philatelic study group bulletins)

To assure a meaningful and equitable evaluation,

Literature must be at least 85% in English. Literature in other languages cannot be fairly judged and therefore must be declined.

Bilingual (English and another language) literature is accepted.

§ Limited Acceptance: Catalogues

Some specialized works denominated as “catalogues” include original research well beyond a simple census and valuation, and

this included knowledge makes *the work more encyclopedic than a mere catalogue*. A “catalogue” may, in fact, represent a compendium of research approaching a handbook. The exclusion of “catalogues” is not intended to disqualify those that include substantial additions to philatelic knowledge.

Clearly the title — catalogue or handbook — is not the limiting factor. If the content is such that the work is more encyclopedic than a mere catalogue, then the author/publisher can enter it as a handbook, but there is no “catalogue” category *per se*.

In summary, if a “catalogue” truly has some scholastic content, then it can be entered and judged as a “handbook,” but usual catalogue characteristics, e.g., completeness of listings or value as a pricing guide, will be disregarded.

§ Excluded Catalogues

Auction catalogues seldom provide much knowledge beyond a value estimate, so they are excluded. “Named Sales” may provide more information, but repetitious of that found elsewhere; rarely if ever original. See above exception for catalogues with notable scholastic content.

General and specialized catalogues that are largely reprints of prior editions that have been updated are excluded since originality, research and authorship are nil. That said, if the editor/publisher deems the work worthy of “handbook” status, it may be entered as such.

§ Limited Acceptance: Bound Volumes of Articles or Columns

A *bound* collection of articles (on the same subject) may be entered as a “handbook,” but there is no provision for single articles. A bound serialized work from a philatelic periodical, originally published in several issues, when *bound together* (not just stapled) could comprise a handbook.

Bound works that are a series of articles, either by the same author written over time or an anthology on a specific topic written by various authors, some of the articles perhaps having been published elsewhere as stand alone articles in a different media, are accepted as “handbooks.”

§ Excluded: Newsletters, Show Programs, Articles, Columns

APS Chapter Activities Committee (CAC) provides a venue for newsletters and programs.

Single or unbound articles or columns are excluded.

Specialty Society Journals and Philatelic Periodicals

It is imperative to note the following criteria provided for philatelic periodicals:

For society journals and periodicals, consider diversity of content, allocation of space to substantive and informative articles, columns and features, and overall value to membership.

All these are important facets of a quality specialty society journal or philatelic periodical. ►

In judging philatelic literature, we seek to judge and evaluate scholarship, the advancement of philatelic knowledge. That means a “journal” must perforce have diverse “substantive and informative articles.” Non-philatelic content, for example, society news and announcements, should be expected as providing service to the society membership, but while no specific limits are imposed on such content, the overall balance there must be relatively light. Journals with minimal “substantive and informative articles” cannot expect to do well against the judging criteria.

Withdrawal or Disqualification by the Jury

Acceptance of a literature entry is not determinative of its acceptability as philatelic literature as defined and limited above. The jury, in its collective judgment, may withdraw any entry deemed “excluded.”

Any entry not meeting the requirements for entry as defined by the prospectus shall be disqualified.

Judging Criteria for Literature

Literature exhibits are evaluated according to the following criteria and weights::

Treatment of contents	40%
Originality, significance and depth of research	40%
Technical matters.....	15%
Production.....	5%

These criteria and weights align the APS Literature Judging with the FIP [*Fédération Internationale de Philatélie*], which was found to be logical and meaningful in principle. These criteria were developed over a period of years, they are well tested and provided an excellent foundation.

§ Treatment (of contents) or “Authorship and Editorship” 40%

Literary style, clarity, and skill in communication.
Correct grammar.
Readily understood and usable.
Utilization of illustrations, charts, graphs, tables.
Format and layout, text flow (editor’s aspects).

CD: Utilization of CD features unique to electronic media.
Searchability, ease of navigation, logic of flow.

§ Originality, Significance and Research 40%

Overall significance of the subject matter, i.e., significance of the subject in terms of its scope, degree of difficulty and philatelic interest.

Significance of the work to the subject.

Degree to which the work displays original discoveries, research, analysis or approaches to a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

For society journals and periodicals, consider diversity of content, allocation of space to substantive and informative articles, columns and features, and overall value to membership.

§ Technical Matters 15%

Evaluation of such aspects as title page and imprint, pagination, credits, bibliography, index, and clarity of illustrations.

CD: Ease of loading, compatibility, clarity of images, contents page, index.

§ Production 5%

Binding, typography, and similar production aspects on the usability of the publication. To avoid the impact of purely commercial aspects, this criterion will only be evaluated to the degree that it represents a negative factor.


It is notable that these criteria track quite closely with the criteria for philatelic exhibits, but with significant and appropriate variations applicable to literature.

Medium

Publication may be either (1) hardcopy, i.e., paper, or (2) electronic, i.e., CD. Web sites are excluded, primarily because there is no permanency.

The FIP draft guidelines were used to note CD aspects for the criteria shown above.

Conclusion

The evaluation criteria are simple, easily understood and readily applied. An evaluation form is provided. 

APS Literature Exhibit Evaluation Form

Show _____ Date _____ Award _____
Exhibit _____
Evaluation Judge _____ Chief Judge _____

Treatment (of contents) or “Authorship and Editorship” 40%

Literary style, clarity, and skill in communication. Correct grammar. Readily understood and usable. Utilization of illustrations, charts, graphs, tables. Format and layout, text flow.
CD: Utilization of CD features. Searchability, ease of navigation, logic of flow.

Originality, Significance and Research 40%

Overall subject significance: Scope, degree of difficulty and philatelic interest.
Significance of the work to the subject.
Discoveries, research, analysis or approaches to a comprehensive subject understanding.
Society journals and periodicals: Diversity of content, allocation of space to substantive and informative articles, columns and features, and overall value to membership.

Technical Matters 15%

Title page and imprint, pagination, credits, bibliography, index, clarity of illustrations.
CD: Ease of loading, compatibility, clarity of images, contents page, index.

Production 5%

Binding, typography, and similar production aspects on the usability of the publication.

Comments and Recommendations (use reverse as necessary)



Reviews Print and Electronic

Books & Catalogues

A Book To Meet a Personal Need

***North Atlantic Packets: Departures and Arrivals 1818–1840* by James R. Pullin. 312 pages, 9 × 11½ inches, casebound, dust jacket, ©2009 self published. Available from the author, 2837 Wright Ave., Winter Park FL 32789, or JRPULLIN77@CFL.RR.COM.**

This book developed from the author's need to document postal history items in his own collection. The details on postal rates during this period and the comings and goings of sailing vessels carrying mail between the ports of New York, Liverpool, and London were not available previously in a single source.

Pullin spent years tracking down the details in museums, libraries, and archives. The information covers the period when such sailing ships carried mail, passengers, and cargo up until the time when steamships took over the business.

Each sailing line is discussed from its origins and the activity of each ship during the period. Specific lines are the Black Ball, Red Star, Blue Swallow Tail, and Dramatic lines of Liverpool, and the Black X and Red Swallow Tail lines of London.

Each sailing vessel and its eventual fate are detailed. Research into newspapers of the time provides stories of a ship's grounding or sinking during storms. Interspersed in the text are wonder-

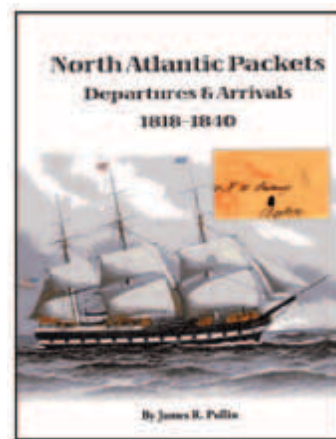
ful color illustrations of covers that traveled on these packets. Indeed these illustrations are one of the highlights and pleasures of the book. Each letter is meticulously described with respect to the postal markings, the rates, and the routes. Tables provide inland letter rates of the time for the United States, Canada, and England.

The second half of the book is devoted to details for each ship by sailing line. The first table lists the ships, their captains, years of service, and the name of the vessel that replaced it. The second table for each line is a chronological listing of departure and arrival dates with the name of the ship and its captain, and pertinent remarks such as weather delays and wrecks, and first and last voyage.

A bibliography, list of newspapers used for source information, and an index conclude the book. One of the visual delights of Pullin's work is the use of maritime and philatelic related illustrations depicting ships, bow figureheads, house flags and other items. A listing credits the sources for these pictures.

Jim Pullin has furnished students of postal history with the tools to analyze their own covers during this period that were sent across the North Atlantic Ocean by sailing ships. His research and descriptions will serve collectors for many years. The book is a monument to his passion and perseverance.

— Alan Warren



More Than a Handbook

***Peru Cancellation Handbook 1858–1873* by Erik A. Emsing. 122 pages, 8½ × 11¼ inches, casebound, ©2008 self published, Rockville, MD. \$85; shipping details from EAEMSING@HOTMAIL.COM.**

When Emsing began to study the 19th century cancellations of Peru some 15 years ago, he found details were lacking, information was not well organized, and many cancels were missing. He set about organizing the data using methods of classification and identification, and preparing good illustrations. This work is more than a handbook since it includes valuations as well.

His introduction presents guidelines to an orderly process for studying cancellations, beginning with identification of the stamps from this period. Cancels are then sorted by class and type, and values are assigned with a cancellation price guide. He illustrates and provides brief descriptions of the stamps issued by Peru from the first Coat of Arms issue in 1858 to the second Llama issue of 1873.

Emsing then lists the postal rates during this period for single- and multiple-weight letters, registration fee, and local and railway letters. These are followed by British and French rates for ships carrying mail between Peru and other Central or South American ports, and to the United States and Europe. The next listing shows the names of more than 200 post offices operating in 20 different postal districts from 1858–1873. He describes additional facilities that handled Peruvian mail, such as the Pacific Steam Navigation Company, the Lima-Callao-Chorillos railway, and British and French consular mail services.

Another chapter identifies 15 classes of cancels including plain and dotted ovals, circular dates, straight line, manuscript, mute cancels, railway and ship marks, and foreign cancels among others. These are all nicely illustrated for visual identification. The next series of tables illustrates each cancel type within each class, and assigns a catalog number. The final tally is 245 distinct types of cancellations.

The price guide is a tabulation of the cancellations by class listing the city or town, the cancel type, the postal district, any ink colors used with the marking, and the value in Euros associated with each cancel. In front of each class and subclass listing are some illustrations as a reminder of how the cancel appears — a nice device to help eliminate confusion. Values are for the cancel on a stamp, not on cover.

The illustrations are very good and are nicely laid out without giving a cramped feeling. They are also slightly enlarged from the originals to reveal more detail. With Emsing's catalogue approach to preparing this handbook, there is no need for an index and none is provided. In the review copy there was a printing ink deficiency on page 46 that obscures the identification of cancel E35. Although the author acknowledges the help of others in his introduction, a brief bibliography would be useful for students of this period of Peruvian marcophily.

— Alan Warren

A Long Anticipated Book

The Postage Stamps of New Zealand: 1855–1873 The Chalon Head Issues by Robert P. Odenweller. 384 pages, 8¾ × 11¼ inches, casebound, dust jacket. ©2009 The Royal Philatelic Society London and The Royal Philatelic Society of New Zealand, London and Wellington. \$90 plus \$5 for delivery in the U.S., orders from and checks payable to Royal Philatelic Society London, c/o P. O. Box 401, Bernardsville, NJ 07924-0401.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This review appeared in an expanded version in the March 2010 issue of *The New Zealand Stamp Collector*, published by the Royal Philatelic Society of New Zealand.

This long anticipated book on the first New Zealand postage stamps is truly a majestic work. What is very apparent throughout this book is the author's genuine passion for these stamps. The production quality of this book is first rate — the binding and printing, quality paper used and color illustrations throughout set a standard for future philatelic publications to aspire to.

No other single issue of New Zealand stamps has been as much written about in philatelic literature as have the Chalon Head stamps. Despite this, Chalon collectors have been faced

with two practical problems. First, this detailed information was fragmented as it was to be found in various books and journals spanning a time period of more than 100 years. Second, there have been conflicting views and opinions expressed on certain topics over this time. Much of this earlier information and opinion is collated and recorded in Odenweller's book, but the addition of new information and the author's own extensive expertise serve to draw the various strands together to make a cohesive and compelling history.

The important and fascinating story as to the ordering, printing, delivery, issuance and distribution of New Zealand's very first postage

stamps, the London prints, is written about with much detail and includes a wealth of information from official documents that has not been previously published. Elsewhere, the author sets forth what some may regard as a controversial opinion as to the dual use of blue and then white papers for a single printing of shilling stamps by John Richardson — an opinion soundly supported by data.

Two enigmatic items discussed and shown together for the first time in color, are both of the known copies of the 3d on pelure paper. A number of factors strongly support the argument that this stamp was never issued and it is of proof status at best. The compelling case that the author makes for the use of the bisected shilling stamps at Port Chalmers only (and not

at Dunedin) will cause many to readjust what they have always believed in this regard. The book includes a detailed listing of all presently recorded bisect covers in a biography style listing with each of the bisect covers illustrated.

I found the chapters of the book concerning the use of provisional papers in 1873 for the changed color issues particularly enjoyable to read, and made this topic, which is potentially confusing and difficult, easily understood. The content of these chapters is groundbreaking and important and will surely see the major catalogues revise the order in which they list these provisional paper printings. In a following chapter enlarged pictures of stamps illustrating the re-entries, flaws and plate varieties are



very successfully used. A user-friendly bibliography has been included, although the omission of the 1988 *Corinphila Antipodes* auction from the list of significant auction sales is an oversight that is worth noting here for future users of this list.

There are a couple of areas that are not covered in depth in this book — the postal history of the period and forgeries. The postal history section acknowledges that this topic is covered in detail in other publications but does provide a summary of postage rates with two parts. The first part lists, with appropriate illustrations of covers, the rates most commonly found on inland covers and covers to selected overseas destinations during

this period. The second summary is a table of the most frequently seen rates for domestic mail and mail to the UK bearing postage stamps up to 1/- in total. Although there are very few good forgeries of the Chalon Heads known, only one page with three illustrated examples is devoted to the topic.

Has the final word on the New Zealand Chalon Head stamps now been written? No, and the author recognizes as much with the inclusion in several chapters of unresolved issues and questions under the heading "Study for the Future." That said, there can be no doubt that this book is now the standard reference for collectors of New Zealand Chalon Head stamps and will be for many years to come.

— Mark Benwie

About Two Royals

www.rpsl.org.uk

The Royal Philatelic Society London, the oldest philatelic society in the world, was established in 1869 as The Philatelic Society, London. Permission to use the prefix *Royal* was granted by His Majesty King Edward VII in 1906. It was 10 years earlier that his son, HRH The Duke of York, became president of the society, an office he continued to hold until his accession to the throne as HM King George V in 1910. Thereafter His Majesty continued to act as its patron, and in 1924 granted the Society permission to use the Royal Arms on its stationery and publications.

www.rpsnz.org.nz

The Royal Philatelic Society of New Zealand was formed in 1888 by a keen group of stamp collectors based in Wellington, New Zealand. They formed "The Philatelic Society of New Zealand". Even from the very beginning their aims were based around research, publication of the results of their studies and the formation of a library of philatelic literature. The Royal prefix was granted in 1946, and since then the patron has been the Governor-General of New Zealand (or his wife since 2007).

An Explosive Subject

***The History of Mail Bombs — A Philatelic & Historical Study* by Dale Speirs. 132 pages (60 in color), 8½ × 11 inches, perfect bound. ©2010 Wreck & Crash Mail Society. \$37.50 plus \$3 media mail postage in U.S., \$6 first class postage to Canada, and \$13.45 global priority mail for other countries from Kendall C. Sanford, 613 Championship Drive, Oxford, CT 06478-3128 or by PayPal (add \$1.75); KAEROPHIL@GMAIL.COM, HTTP://WRECKANDCRASH.ORG.**

The title of this extensive monograph is slightly misleading in that it covers more than mail bombs — letters and parcels containing explosive, also delving into biochemical terrorism, hoaxes, interrupted mail from flights that were bombed, damaged mail from suffragist and other attacks on postal boxes, and government attempts to protect mail recipients, including x-ray and irradiation. In short, it covers anything mail-related to terrorism, murder, mayhem, revenge, and the lunatic fringe.

The 64-page main section of the book is primarily anecdotal, although amply source referenced to an extensive numerical list that immediately follows. Organization is by topic rather than by chronological order, and includes history and types of letter bombs, defending against bombs, who sends bombs — personal grudges, political, suffragist movement in England, copycats, fanatical causes, and biochemical warfare. Of particular interest is the campaign British suffragists mounted to bring their cause to the public, notably targeting pillar boxes with staining bombs containing ink, oil, and varnish to render the addresses on mail unreadable, incendiary bombs filled with paraffin and self-ig-

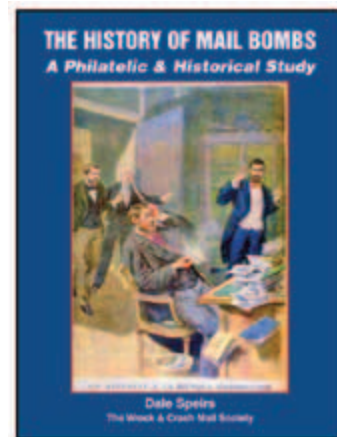
ning phosphorus, corrosive bombs usually containing sulfuric acid, and — to a lesser extent — explosive bombs.

Despite Speirs' sometimes quirky syntax, the book is a good read and provides great insight into this little-known aspect of philately. If this was as far as it went, this would be a superior book. However, it goes much farther with three self-standing additions — seven pages illustrating Israeli marks on mail from the 1980s and 1990s that was inspected and/or x-rayed for explosives, 27 pages reproducing Steven Berlin's *The Devil's Mail — 1948–Present* exhibit showing covers with various mail bombs markings and labels, and 11 pages compiled by Norman Hoggarth of security cachets and labels related to inspections for explosives and biochemical weapons.

The Israeli illustrations would be even more valuable if translations were provided for those who cannot read Hebrew. The volume also would have been greatly enhanced by the addition of an index.

Production quality is extremely good, a testament to the kind of work now available through online services for small print runs. Image quality is consistently high.

— Albert W. Starkweather



When Good Trains Go Bad

***Railway Disaster Mail* by Robin Gwynn and Norman Hoggarth. 326 pages, A4, case bound. ©2010 Stuart Rossiter Trust. Available for UK £65 plus postage — £5 within the UK, £9.50 to Europe, £19.50 (\$30) rest of the world air, £17.00 (\$26) rest of the world surface — from Richard Wheatley, 7 Manor Croft, Leeds, England LS15 9BW; AREWHYUU@TALK-TALK.NET, or Aerophil, 613 Championship Drive, Oxford, CT 06478-3128; KAEROPHIL@GMAIL.COM.**

This book opens a doorway for collectors wishing to pursue a branch of postal history for which until now there has been no printed guide. The first printed work on disaster mail, Gaston Tournier's *Les Plis Accidentés Français* (1932), devoted just a couple of pages to covers salvaged from eight rail wrecks. Adrian Hopkins investigated more widely, and about 24 pages of the final edition of his *History of Wreck Covers* (1970) dealt with a total of 44 rail events. Apart from occasional articles nothing else has been published.

This book records material salvaged from more than 500 rail casualties, bringing together all information regarding recovered mail into one place, listing it by country and chronological order.

The listings include cachets, labels and explanatory post office letters used on or with items recovered from rail casualties, and manuscript notes where it seems probable they were or may have been written by postal authorities. It also includes a handful of cases where no specific explanatory markings or letters are known, but surviving mail definitely can be proven to have been involved. Wherever possible, factual reports have been cited giv-

ing details of accidents and background information.

In addition to accidents, derailments and collisions there are also fires, hijackings, hold-ups, looted mail and theft, collisions with motor vehicles, natural disasters, washouts, boulders on tracks, landslides, avalanches, and acts of war. The authors have included an account of the U.S. *Train Late / Mail Delayed* cancellations and have grouped these together under the first reference in 1891 although they cover up to 1914. There is a very useful Analysis of Entries, which lists each wreck by date, type of wreck or accident, and location.

For each listing, there is a description of the wreck, and each cachet or label is shown. The cachet and label illustrations are in color, which makes identification of markings much easier. The source of the information on the details of the wreck and postal markings is also shown.

Unlike the companion book by the same authors — *Maritime Disaster Mail*, published in 2003 — there are no rarity factors of postal markings and covers, which would have been useful in determining the value of covers. ►



The book is divided into eight different chapters, each covering a different time period starting with 1850 and ending in 1995. There is a short appendix which lists train wrecks where postal markings are known, but the dates of the wreck are not certain.

Finally, there is an index which lists wrecks by location.

The book is very well done and will be an essential reference for collectors of railway disaster mail.

— Kendall C. Sanford

FDCs from Down Under

Australian First Day Covers by Michael Moore, Colleen Woolley, and Frank Pauer. 220 pages, 8½ × 11½ inches, spiral bound, soft covers. ©2009 Australian Cover Society, Inc., Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. A\$95 plus shipping from Australian Cover Society, P.O. Box 2066, Bayswater, 3153 Victoria, Australia; WWW.ACS-INC.COM.AU.

This is a guide to the illustrated first day covers of Australia with each of 17 chapters devoted to a specific cachet maker. Some chapters, released previously as monographs or articles, have been revised and updated. The Australian Cover Society is less than 10 years old but has already established itself as a force in the field of illustrated mail and cacheted first day cover reporting.

Each author brings important skills to this book. Michael Moore is the chief researcher and writer of the handbook. Colleen Woolley prepared the design and layout as well as the indexes. She has also written elsewhere about the pictorial postmarks of Australia. Frank Pauer is the current president of the Australian Cover Society and many of the illustrations are from his own extraordinary collection.

This guide does not cover FDCs offered by Australia Post but rather those from the private sector. It includes some cacheted event covers. Only a few first day covers were produced and serviced in the late 1920s and early 1930s in Australia. Each chapter begins with a brief biography of the cachet maker. Their covers are then shown chronologically as part of the story of their activities.

One of the early producers was John Gower, an invalid who created his first rubber-stamped FDC for the 6d Kookaburra stamp in 1932. He also formed a pen-friend club, the South Australian Stamp Company, and later, the Wesley Cover Service that survives to this day under new ownership. Examples of covers he created are shown to help identify them.

The book proceeds with other chapters on each first day cover producer, providing details of the personnel involved, and illustrating covers generally by stamp issue. Other topics mentioned within the chapters are generic or all-purpose cachets, backdating of FDCs, logos used by the cover makers, early advertisements, and — where known — their first and last covers.

One chapter is devoted to Arthur Bergen, born in 1914 and still active as a cover producer and patron of the Australian Cover Society. He became aware of postal history as a high school student. He sent a letter in 1930 to the Barbados that was sent via the SS *Tahiti*. The ship sank but the mail was salvaged. The recipient returned the envelope to him. Bergen began making FDCs in the 1930s. His interest broadened to preparing flight covers and Antarctic relief expedition covers.

The final chapter identifies another 25 lesser known cover producers. One cachet maker was called Cover Craft but had no connection to the American or British firms with a similar name. ArtCraft made some envelopes for Australian stamp issues.

The book concludes with a bibliography, a chronological index by stamp issue dates with cross references, and a general index. This is a key tool for collectors of first day covers of Australia.

— Alan Warren



Errors Book Updated

Scott Catalogue of Errors on U.S. Postage Stamps 15th Edition by Stephen R. Datz. 232 pages, 6 × 9 inches, perfect bound. ©2009 Scott Publishing Co. \$49.99 plus shipping from: Amos Hobby Publishing, 911 Vandemark Road, Sidney, OH 45365.

This succeeds to the 14th edition published in 2005. It opens with an introduction that defines relevant terminology used by EFO-collectors and provides instructions for how to use the catalogue.

The errors are divided into imperforates, color-omitted, hologram-omitted, back inscription, inverts, printer's waste, and freaks and oddities. Each error is identified by Scott number and is illustrated, along with a value and the quantity known. More than 400 useful footnotes amplify the listings.

This edition has more than 100 new listings, including some older items that were recently documented. Also included for the first time are separate listings for modern proofs from the American Bank Note archives. They appear in an "Error-Like Imperforates" section with other imperforates that resemble error stamps, but are not.

The 14th edition was published in 2005. Both editions are in color but the new edition has consistently darker images, apparently due to a change in paper stock. Many of the earlier images appeared washed out, while most in the new edition have more realistic colors, although some are overly dark. The new edition also replaced some of the still black and white images so that only some of the rarer errors remain in black and white.

Based on the catalogue values, the error market has seen mixed results in recent years. The values for such rarities as the Jenny (Scott No. C3a) airmail inverts and the 1869 inverts have soared but the values of many common modern errors are flat or have declined.

One thing that has risen is the price of the catalogue. The 14th edition retailed for half the current price. The Datz catalogue remains the only one-stop resource for error collectors and dealers and is highly recommended for anyone interested in this specialty.

— Peter Martin

Journals & Newsletters

An Envable Task

Pennsylvania Postal Historian. Published quarterly by the Pennsylvania Postal History Society, 8½ × 11 inches, saddle stitched, 30 pages. Editor: Norman Shachat, 382 Tall Meadow Lane, Yardley, PA 19067-6402. www.PAPHS.ORG.

Serving and encouraging research for the study and understanding their respective state's postal history. Pennsylvania postal history is rich in this aspect, particularly in the area of stampless covers.

A feature article in the February issue updates the Philadelphia numeral 4 markings on early private ship letters whose discovery first appeared in this journal 22 years ago. The article was written by Rick Leiby who gives an exhaustive survey of the four known markings and reveals the discovery of a fifth marking. Leiby provides examples of the markings and concludes his study with a census of the known markings.

Another short article by Chuck Sabella and Shachat dis-

sected a Phillippsburg, PA cover to Germany together with a translation of the enclosed letter.

Other articles included a Charles Fricke piece on two "return to sender" envelopes which had bar code issues and an update of Pennsylvania manuscript markings which appears to be an ongoing project. All the articles were well written and the black and white illustrations were clear but scanned on the light side.

Any society news was outlined by the president in his column.

— Alfred Carroccia



Journal With an Interesting History

Machine Cancel Forum. Published quarterly by the Machine Cancel Society, 8½ × 11 inches, stapled, 32 pages. Editor: Alexander J. Savakis, P. O. Box 609, Warren, OH 44482. WWW.MACHINECANCEL.ORG.

This journal has an interesting history. The former *Machine Cancel Forum*, known as *Machine Cancel Forum I* or *Old Machine Cancel Forum*, was published under the predecessor Flag Cancel Society. More than 3,000 pages were published before that society changed its name to the Machine Cancel Society.

A new series of the *Machine Cancel Forum* began publication in January 1987 starting with page 1. To date more than 4,000 pages have been published, a remarkable feat for a quarterly publication. Special supplements are published in conjunction with annual society meetings held at major stamp shows. A special supplement was prepared for the this year's Garfield-Perry March Party which hosted the annual general meeting of the Machine Cancel Society.

Machine cancel collecting is the study of not only the cancel, but also the machine that made it. This theme is prevalent in all the articles with an emphasis on varieties and types, descriptions of machines and lots of lists with plenty of updates. The focus on eras is balanced with the treatment of modern cancels evident with new discoveries of inkjet cancels found on everyday mail.

One would think that too much information would cause each issue to be overcrowded with articles too technical and too difficult to read. This is not true. Savakis does a phenomenal job putting each issue together. The layout of illustrations and text is balanced even when there is an overwhelming number of illustrations. The black and white illustrations are clear, particularly those that show magnified diagrams of markings. Even though the page layout is one column across Savakis takes the time to break the monotony of text with the illustrations. Most interesting are the occasional updates, the latest describing purple ma-

chine cancels and surveys of state cancels. The current state being examined is Utah.

While the majority of articles deal with machine cancels from the United States, an occasional article deals with foreign machine cancels. Otto Koemel writes an interesting essay examining the Columbia machines in the Netherlands. His prose is typical of the writing in the *Machine Cancel Forum*. In plain language he examines the use of this machine as seen in the perspective of its use in other countries in Europe. This, he explains, is important especially when it comes to distinguishing between two similar looking cancellations. Numerous examples are illustrated to help make the text understandable.

Most philatelic journals strive to be reporters of philatelic knowledge. Some fail due to lack of material or even lack of interest. A journal that consistently publishes pages and pages of interesting material must be doing something right. *The Machine Cancel Forum* is one magazine any collector can pick up and instantly get hooked to this exciting area.

— Alfred Carroccia



Get Reviewed

Send three current issues of your journal or newsletter to Alfred Carroccia, 152 Windmill Road, West Seneca, NY 14218-3666; fuzzy9600@verizon.net, to have it reviewed in a future issue of *The Philatelic Communicator*.

Electronic Media & Software

An 'Ultimate' Stamp Resource? *www.stamp2.com*

STAMP2.COM™ bills itself as “the ultimate stamp resource.” The about us page claims this is the “definitive portal where philatelists and hobbyists come together to trade, study, exchange information and get the latest news in the philatelic world.”

The site, which claims to have 4,200 working links, is jam-packed with so many news articles, links, and information that you will be clicking links for at least a half hour just to get a feel of what is contained within. Contact information for the site lists Rarities International Pte. Ltd. in Singapore as the owner, spearheaded by Managing Director Vikram K. Chand, FRPSL.

The header contains links to news, exclusives, specialized, general, Cinderella, thematic collecting and other links as well as the *stamp2 Shoppe*. The most recent news articles are also on the front page, along with a phenomenal gallery of multimedia presentations, video interviews, a link to a philatelic library brimming with helpful facts, and a forum. I was unable to get the link for the discussion forum to work, but numerous ICQ contacts are listed with their collecting interests. (ICQ is a chat/instant messaging program.)

The multimedia portal contains some great links including a *World Rarities* presentation cultivated from auction sites, a stamp atlas, and a tour through a virtual museum, all of which are easily navigated and contain some stunning images. It was disappointing to find that some of the links in the library section were not working. Those that do are valuable resources, such as the terms translator, abbreviations, terms and their meanings, and types of perforations links. The stamp facts link contains some interesting philatelic trivia



you might enjoy using at a club meeting. The books area is merely a portal to purchase philatelic literature. The website awards section contains numerous links to other quality philatelic sites. The awards appear to have stopped in 2004. The news article portal looks to be updated more recently with articles posted in January through March of this year. Some of the articles are links to other sites on the web; many are related to the Asian stamp market.

The *General* articles sections has informative writings on perforations, airmails, Christmas seals, the development of the post card, the backs of stamps, the UPU, chemical changelings, and the history of stamp manufacturing.

The multimedia sections could be shown on a projector at a club meeting. The general and resource sections can be useful to both novices and more advanced collectors. This site has much interesting information but needs some maintenance and updating to fix broken links and to update information in certain sections.

— Heather Sweeting

CD an Economical Alternative

Utvalg av Postens Rundskriv 1939–1949 (Selection of Postal Circulars 1939–1949), Version 1.0. CD in Norwegian. ©2008 Norwegian War and Field Post Society, Norway. . \$25 postpaid from Erik Lørdahl, Gydas v. 52, 1413 Tårnåsen, Norway; payment details from ERIK.LORDAHL@GMAIL.COM.

The Norwegian War and Field Post Society has generated a number of publications in recent years pertaining to aspects of World War II postal history related primarily to that country. The CD reviewed here is another example of a publication that would be costly to release in a printed version.

The disc contains selected postal circulars issued by Norway that pertain to rates, routes and other postal matters during the Second World War period and several years following. The information is of vital interest to researchers studying the handling of military-related and civil mail during this period.

The content is presented in several different electronic formats. Two PDF pages give an overview of the CD and an explanation of the large Excel® spreadsheet file. The spreadsheet is an index in chronological order of all the circulars selected and presented on this disc. The file lists the postal circular number, date of issue, subject heading, primary theme (airmail, Christmas parcels, fieldpost, regulations, routes), and secondary theme (by specific

country, or Europe, USA, abroad, etc.). The explanation page also tells how to sort the spreadsheet for particular topics.

The largest file contains individual JPEG images of each circular as listed on the spreadsheet. Each page is a separate image. To give the user some idea of the volume of material, there are 48 pages of 1939 postal circulars and 68 pages of 1944 items.

Users will need Adobe Acrobat Reader, Excel, and a photo or image program to open JPG picture to study the content of the CD. Although the circulars are in Norwegian, researchers can get some idea of content with a dictionary. Translation help is available to some extent through the War and Field Post Society and the American Philatelic Society's Translation Service. The Norwegian society, which publishes a quarterly journal, provides on this CD a valuable resource for students of Norwegian mail during this period.

— Alan Warren

Material for reviews may be sent to the editor. Reviews are also welcomed from others. Reviews should be concise and stress those aspects that are helpful examples (positive or negative) for other authors, editors, and publishers. Review requests from those having an interest in the item, such as publishers and distributors, must include a copy of the publication.

iCommunications — Continued from Cover

when first planning or building a site. The domain name can include the name of the society or theme of the organization, which are important keywords as well.

Metadata (meta tags)

This is not a scary word; it's simply the coded information within the web page that provides information to search engines. Metadata is contained in an area of the code called the *head*. Think of it like yourself. You have a head (where the brains are) and a body (where the content is). Web pages have the same pieces.

When looking at the page code, there should be a section at the top of the page named *head*. The word is in brackets — that's where the head starts. The head ends with the word in brackets, but with a slash character before the word and it looks like this:

```
<head>
metadata code stuff goes in here (see the following examples)
</head>
```

The information contained in the head provides instructions for things such as the following. In each case, an example of the code is included and you only need to change the italic sans serif text and copy and paste it into a web page head. Metatags typically are entered in the same order as they are listed below, one line under the other. Other meta tags exist, but these are the main ones that should be included on every web page.

Site and/or Page Descriptions

There should be a site and page description; one for the web site as a whole and one for each page. Each of these should be a paragraph of no more than 250–300 characters. The Home page will have the main description for the site, and each page description will include information about what is on that specific page.

So, write a few sentences describing the web site and its goals to start. This text is picked up by search engines and stored in their databases, where the engine later digs for information to display on a results page.

Did you ever notice that some search return pages have links with a name and funny characters that are confusing while others have real descriptions? Which link did you click on? The funny stuff you can't read or the one in English? The description text is displayed in the search results so the reader gets an idea of what's offered at the web site.

```
<meta name="description" content="Description of web site
and purpose" />
```

Page Name (Title)

When a web page appears on the computer screen, there's a name at the top of the window. This is the page name and it's horribly surprising how many pages do not have one. This is one of the most important text pieces a web site can have. Search engines put a lot of value on a page's name as it is indexed at the highest level. Omit it at your peril.

Review the page content and ensure the page name reflects the content. Again, this is an item contained in the metadata area.

```
<title>Name of the web site page</title>
```

In some instances, I put the page name and then the site name:

```
<title>Page Name — Web Site Name</title>
```

This reiterates the site name on every page, while maintaining unique page names that are descriptive of the page content.

Keywords

Seems everyone has heard of this term. From the keywords I've seen on some philatelic sites, every word you can think of that has anything to do with philately has been included. This is not a good idea as search engines are much smarter than they were years ago.

Keywords only work well if the word is also contained in the text on the page. That means different pages will have different keywords. Read the text on the page, pick out the most important things and add those keywords into the metadata area reserved for them. In some cases, they evaluate the words and actually penalize the rank of the site thinking the web master is trying to trick the engine to list the site in more places.

Something more to remember here is that most internet searchers are getting very savvy and no longer use a single word when searching for information. Keywords are now key phrases made up of usually three–four words. This type of search isolates the web pages returned in a search to those most meaningful. Include three–five phrases with a maximum character count of approximately 150 characters.

```
<meta name="keywords" content="keywords and/or keyword
phrases seperated by commas" />
```

Copyright

Include the copyright information in the head area so the search engine can find it should someone search on this criteria.

```
<meta name="copyright" content="&copy; year copyright holder" />
```

Language

Some searchers only wish to have results listed if a certain language is used.

```
<meta name="language" content="english" />
```

Names

On occasion, searches are conducted looking for specific authors or web masters.

```
<meta name="author" content="name of the webmaster" />
```

Descriptive Link Text

Do not use a link within the site that says 'read more' or 'click here'. Use descriptive text for such links. Example:

"The Red Herring New Year's issue will be on sale at the local post office."

Do not put a *read more here* link after the issue's name; use the title as the link. This style of linking is more valuable to the site as they appear in search results for that specific term.

Robots (Spiders)

Search engines send out inquiries in the form of small programs looking for new content and changes to web sites. These are called robots or spiders and they *crawl* the web comparing old and new content. When they find something new, they send it back to be indexed/updated. ►



Keeping Track of Former Covers

Editors who vary cover colors and designs from issue to issue are faced with keeping the look fresh while maintaining the publication's identity. A media manager, such as Adobe Bridge which is included in the Creative Suite series, is a handy tool for keeping track of these. I make a PDF of each issue that is kept in a common folder. When I open the folder in Bridge I can see thumbnails of past issues.

— Albert W. Starkweather

Telling robots to index a web site is a good practice. One can also tell the robot not to index the site, certain folders or even files if desired.

```
<meta name="robots" content="index or noindex,follow or nofollow" />
```

Site Map

As if an index on the Home page were not enough, add a site map page. The site map is essentially a table of contents. Every page on the site is listed along with a short description of the page and every entry is linked to the appropriate page. I sometimes have the content listed both alphabetically as well as by hierarchy.

Why do this if the same information is available in other places throughout the web site?

First, it's consolidated and easy for a visitor to see the entire site at a glance in different forms. Some searchers associate what they're looking for with alphabetical order, others see the pattern through the structure of hierarchy.

Second, these are internal links and we want as much interconnection as possible within the site.

Third, search engines love such pages as they're full of keywords and links.

Site Search

EDITOR'S NOTE: Visitors to the WU #30 Website and other sites I maintain will note inclusion of a Google search box that allows them to search the site or the internet. This is a valu-

able tool for large sites. The code may be copied from the *Page Source* view.

Link to Related Sites

Develop and use a *Linking Policy*. Links to every site on the web that contain the word 'stamp' is a useless exercise and will get your web site stuffed somewhere in the lower results pages. Link only to good web sites with relevant content to the organization's web site. Be selective and in some cases, absolutely strict in the interpretation of linking policy when asked for a reciprocal link, citing the linking policy if required.

Have as many sites link to the organization's web site as possible. Good web sites have a higher page rank in Google and consequently, bring higher value to the web sites they link to. Quantity is fine, but quality is much better in the case of incoming links.

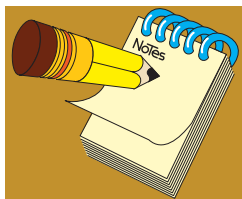
Every page on the web site must have a link to the site's *Home* page. It's the most important page on the site and search engines will again add value to those links and your home page will increase in value, driving higher page rank.

Remember that internal links have value and including as much internal interlinking of pages as possible should be the goal with the home page receiving the main benefit.

Conclusion

Getting on the first page of Google's search results is the goal. We may not reach that goal quickly, but without implementing good practices, we never will.





Secretary-Treasurer's Report

May 3, 2010

New Member

1975 Termini, Benedict A., 8520 Meadowbrook Drive, Fort Worth, TX 76120-5204; e-mail: TERMINI@CHARTER.NET. Author: *Perforated Hearts — Hearts on Stamps* (American Topical Association Handbook #158, 2009); freelance writer: American Philatelist and Mid-Cities Stamp Club Newsletter. Sponsor: George Griffenhagen.

Reinstated

1674 John Campbell, 1c Haumoana Rd., Haumoana, 4102, Hawke's Bay, N2, New Zealand

Change of Address

0611 Fred Korotkin, 4925 Minnetonka Blvd., Apt. 611, Minneapolis, MN 55416-2275

1049 Rueben A. Ramkissoon, 11067 Benton St., Apt. 236, Loma Linda, CA 92354-3182

1705 Jay Schaffner, 355 Eighth Ave., Apt. 1-J, New York, NY 10001-4839

1883 Rev. Robert T. Voss, P.O. Box 35, McFarland, WI 53558

1940 Allison Gallaway, 5719 13th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20011

Contributions

1309 Seven J. Rod, South Orange, NJ; \$10

1511 Robert Rawlins, Healdsburg, CA; \$5

1683 Kevin O'Reilly, Yellowknife, NT Canada; \$7.50

Resigned

1479 Karen L. Weigt, Middleton, WI

1603 James Bendon, Limassol, Cyprus

1870 Raymond Ireson, Roxboro, PQ Canada

1887 David McNamee, Alamo, CA

1910 Douglas Moss, Richardson, TX

1948 Ray Cartier, Arlington, TX

Dropped Nonpayment of Dues

0052 F. Burton Sellers, Denver, CO

0069 Lester E. Winick, Galesburg, IL

1857 Richard A. Monty, Bel Air, MD

1886 Samuel B. Treat, Jr., Ridgecrest, CA

1940 Ralph A. Weil, Cincinnati, OH

1941 Norman Alan Cohen, Dallas, TX

1960 Rufus W. Wilson, Dalton, PA

Deceased

1650 Dr. Peter Keim Iber, Peoria, AZ

About Writers Unit #30

Purpose of APS Writers Unit #30 is to encourage and assist philatelic communication, knowledge, and comradeship. Membership is open to any philatelic writer, columnist, editor, or publisher, as well as anyone interested in philatelic communication.

Join Us Today

Membership includes a subscription to *THE PHILATELIC COMMUNICATOR*. Applications received before October 1 will be recorded as members for that calendar year and will receive all four issues of *THE PHILATELIC COMMUNICATOR* for that year. Applications received on or after October 1 will be recorded as members for the following calendar year. An application may be downloaded at www.WU30.ORG or copied from the facing page. Existing members are encouraged to duplicate this form and give it to potential members.

Membership Dues

The membership dues for each calendar year are:

USPS ZIP Code Addresses..... \$20.00

Canada and Mexico \$22.50

All Other Addresses \$25.00

Payment must be made in U.S. funds by a check imprinted with a U.S. bank transit number, or by postal money order, payable to *APS Writers Unit #30*. Some overseas members prefer to send U.S. bank notes by certified mail.

Updating Your Mailing Address

Please notify us of address changes to ensure that you receive each issue of *THE PHILATELIC COMMUNICATOR* without delay. This will also save WU#30 several dollars because the USPS charges us when it has to send us an address correction and we still have to pay the postage for reshipping the issue to the member.

George B. Griffenhagen, WU #30 Secretary-Treasurer
2501 Drexel St., Vienna, VA 22180-6906;
ggriffenhagen@aphanet.org

PHILATELIC COMMUNICATOR ADVERTISING RATES

We can accept camera-ready copy or create an ad for you. Color is free!

Full Page — \$80 • 7.33 × 10 inches (44 × 60 picas)

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Eighth Page — \$20 • 3.6 × 2.25 inches (21p6 × 13p6 picas)

Deadlines January 15, April 15, July 15, October 15

CONTACT THE EDITOR: 813-962-7964 • ASTARKWEATHER@WU30.ORG



APS Writers Unit #30 Membership Application

Send To:

George B. Griffenhagen, Secretary-Treasurer
12226 Cathedral Drive
Woodbridge, VA 22192-2232

Full Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Street: _____ City: _____ State & ZIP + 4: _____

Check applicable classifications. List philatelic credits giving as complete information as possible.

☐ Author: published books, handbooks, brochures

☐ Editor: publication(s) and organizational affiliation(s)

☐ Columnist: name and location of publication

☐ Freelance writer: (occasional) publications in which published, nature of material submitted

☐ Regular writer: staff member/worker, longer articles not columns — identify category and name of publication

The appropriate membership fee is enclosed (specify calendar year below).

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Canada and Mexico	\$22.50
Overseas Addresses.....	\$25.00

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